DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 126 233 CE 005 993

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TITLE The Prospect of Motorcycle Safety Education in Secondary Schools.
PUB DATE 21 Nov 74
NOTE 5p.; Remarks presented at the North Carolina Conference on Highway Safety (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, November 21, 1974)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Driver Education; *Educational Needs; Motor Vehicles; Program Planning; *Safety Education; *Secondary Education; Traffic Safety
IDENTIFIERS *Motorcycles

ABSTRACT

Motorcycle safety education will become a necessity in the near future due to the growing demands of secondary students for education in this area. The Motorcycle Safety Foundation is sponsored by major motorcycle industries and is involved with developing programs and materials to promote motorcycle safety education. The high rate of motorcycle accidents during the first few months of motorcycle driving supports the need for motorcycle safety education in secondary schools. A program of this sort should be voluntary and come after the student has completed driver education instruction. Motorcycles can be obtained by schools with the cooperation of motorcycle dealers. Finally, local support is necessary to guarantee the initiation, continuation, and success of motorcycle safety education programs. (Author/EC)

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THE PROSPECT OF MOTORCYCLE SAFETY EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

(Remarks by Dr. Alfred S. King, Coordinator of Driver Education, East Carolina University at the N.C. Conference on Highway Safety, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, November 21, 1974)

If the title of this presentation were stated in the form of a question, I could quickly give this simple answer: Motorcycle Safety Education in our secondary schools is on its way and may very well become mandatory in the not too distant future, therefore, educators had better be deciding where it best fits into the secondary curriculum and find teachers prepared to instruct it.

Educators seem to be moving into a very familar position - that of having to expediently meet the demands of their constituency, in this case, offering motorcycle safety education to all high school students. (I am not discounting the need to offer it at lower levels, however, that is not my issue today.) The manufacturers are too busy selling and servicing their products and could not feasibly or properly instruct each purchaser in motorcycle safety. However, they have not abandoned all educational activity but are responding to this need through the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (M.S.F.).

MOTORCYCLE SAFETY FOUNDATION'S INVOLVEMENT

The Motorcycle Safety Foundation is sponsored By the giants of the industry (Honda, Suzuki, Yamaha, Kawasaki and Harley-Davidson) for the specific purpose of developing programs and materials which promote motorcycle safety education. Although only about three years old, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation has sponsored numerous workshops across the nation for the purpose of preparing college people to develop and instruct teacher preparation courses at their respective universities. The Motorcycle Safety Foundation has also developed instructional and informational materials in addition to sponsoring and lending their expertise

wherever possible to help universities begin their programs of preparation for secondary school teachers. These activities vividly reflect the sincere interest of motorcycle manufacturers to accept a degree of responsibility for preparing youngsters for the safer operation of motorcycles.

IMPETUS FACTS

The impetus for secondary schools to get involved in offering motorcycle safety education lies candidly in the statistics of accidents, injuries and numbers of motorcycles. North Carolina recorded 2,869 motorcycle accidents in 1973 which produced 2,493 injuries and 91 fatalities. The 1973 registration figures show 95,917 motorcycles in North Carolina up from approximately 78,000 in 1972 and projected estimate of 115,000 motorcycles to be registered in this year of 1974. Nationally the 1974 registrations are expected to move very close to 5,000,000 from the 4,353,502 registered in 1973.

According to the National Safety Council's "Accident Facts" publication, the motorcyclist risk of fatal injury on our nation's highways is approximately 4 times as great as that of the automobile driver. It is also common knowledge that the first few months of motorcycle driving are the most treacherous for operators. Some experts claim that as high as 70 percent of all motorcycle accidents occur to drivers with less than six months experience on the road. Borrowers of motorcycles apparently a low experience group, also are reported to have a high accident rate.

These reported facts which I have just related admonish parents to be exceptionally cautious when making the decision as to whether to provide a motorcycle for their youngster's fun and transportation. Since many parents cannot long parry the constant volley of demands by their offsprings for a motorcycle, they eventually give in. Consequently, because of their knowledge of the high possibility for bodily injury to motorcyclists who have accidents, these same

parents will become formidable foes for school boards if they fail to bring about provisions in the school curriculum for motorcycle safety education. This is the primary premise upon which I base my belief that motorcycle safety education will soon be a mandate for the secondary school curriculum in many school systems.

Other factors which will hasten the move for motorcycle safety education in the secondary school are the requirement for a license endorsement for the operator of a motorcycle and the fact that two states now and one other will shortly require a course in motorcycle safety by operators under the age of 18 prior to licensing. This training is in addition to the driver education requirement.

THE MOTORCYCLE SAFETY PROGRAM

The motorcycle safety program should be voluntary and come after a student has completed his driver education instruction. This sequence allows the student to devote more time to on-cycle instruction. The major hurdle for most new operators is the development of skill in the use and coordination of controls without having to interrupt their visual activities involved in the I.P.D.E. process. Therefore, on-cycle activities should consume the majority of time spent during the training period.

A.D.T.S.E.A., in a new publication "Policies and Guidelines for Motorcycle Safety Education: On-Street Riders," recommends a specific course for motorcycle safety varying between 22-25 instructional hours. The course includes 11-14 hours of classroom instruction, seven hours in an off-street range environment and four hours on-street.

MOTORCYCLES FURNISHED

It has been no problem for existing programs to obtain motorcycles on loan from local dealers and none are expected for new programs. Dealer cooperation will

vary according to his personal feelings about participating in a program, but all have the prereogative of accepting a monetary incentive from the manufacturers for involvement in a motorcycle safety program with any public school system. It has been my observation that no one make of motorcycles has been, nationally, more active in program participation, however, the Honda dealer in Greenville, North Carolina and the Honda representative covering North Carolina have been most helpful to my program. I might add that they did so without any semblance of a hassle.

LOCAL EFFORT

My final statements will deal with local impetus. Initially the program should be undertaken with the expectation that there will be continuing local support involved. The Motorcycle Safety Foundation and the dealers can be counted upon to guide, consult, and produce their prearranged contributions but a sustaining program needs strong local commitments. Instructor salaries, teaching aids and materials, insurance premiums, classroom space, off-street training areas and trails, storage space for the motorcycles and a contingency fund for maintenance and repair of the motorcycles must be assured on a continuous basis. Too many programs may come in like the proverbial lion and go out hurriedly like a lamb if they totally depend upon outside sources to sustain their program.